

TESTIMONY RE: SB 382 FISCAL NOTE

The fiscal note for SB 382 includes a statement of significant Long Range Impact based on a misunderstanding about the bill. Specifically, it is noted that the bill has the potential of increasing admissions at the Montana State Hospital and the Montana Chemical Dependency Center. All admissions to the Montana State Hospital are made as a result of a civil commitment proceeding filed in state district court. Participants in mental health treatment courts are involved in criminal, not civil proceedings. While a person in a mental health court program may experience a flare-up of a mental illness that makes them meet the criteria for civil commitment, this has nothing to do with their participation in mental health court. In fact, to the extent that some mental health crises can be avoided through access to effective treatment, it would be our view that people in the mental health court are more likely remains stable. As for the Montana Chemical Dependency Center, some participants in the mental health court may qualify for MCDC treatment but it is not because they are in mental health court

that this is so. Rather, as persons in need of the services MCDC offers, they may qualify for and receive MCDC services. Again, due to the monitoring participants receive in mental health court, some participants who might otherwise go to MCDC may be treated in the community instead.